CHARLTON

HISTORICAL SKETCHES,

BY

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CEMETERIES.

The early setlers of Charlton were not rich but hard working. They came from "down the coast" while full of young life and blood to encounter the labors of the frontier. It is not at all strange that they put much of their time upon the soil they were tilling. In regard to the burial places of their dead Whittier, in his poem "The old Burying ground," spoke a general truth.

"The dreariest spot in all the land
To death they set apart.
With scanty grace from nature's hand,
And none at all from art."

We find many private burial places scattered over our town. The people had not the money for extensive outlays upon graves. Headstones with inscriptions were infrequent among the poor and striving, and all were such. So we find but very few inscriptions prior to 1800. This is easily accounted for: it was not because they did not have a mind to honor the places of their dead, but because they did not have the means. The wealthier ones of the community, as they should, did something to indicate the places; but even this remark has many exceptions. Even those abundantly able were neglectful in this matter. The earliest recorded burial we find to be in 1744, the first one in Dresser Hill yard. There were, without a doubt, earlier burials in other yards, for this town, then a portion of Oxford, began to be settled some years before this date.

INDIAN HILL BURIAL PLACE.

We mention this at the outset because of the aborigines who lived here before the white people. This hill is opposite of the residence of Elisha Darling. There have been from time to time evidences in the shape of Indian tools found, telling us of their haunts in various parts of the town. Well-authenticated tradition points to this hill as their burial place. It is a pretty, gracefully shaped knoll, and one which they would be likely to select. There have been no Indians residing here, to speak of, since the French war; hence this burial place, if such it was, has hardly been used since the settling of our town. On the farm of Elisha Darling, on the east side of Prospect Hill, is the ruin of a very ancient cellar, which tradition says was the hut of an Indian. It is in his woods, some twenty-five rods from the railroad. In the middle of the excavation there is a large chestnut tree. A large split rock is near by.

THE McINTIRE CEMETERY.

Few may know of this burial place in Charlton. It is but a few rods in the rear of the house of R. B. Dodge, Esq., on the land now owned by Frank L.

Horn, and in early times was owned by Obediah McIntire, from whom we infer it received this local name. The families in this section a hundred years ago were mostly McIntires, which fact may add the name still stronger. There are some thirty graves at this spot, from which we infer it was a public burial place. There is now upon it a young growth of timber—the second since the burials and the third since the first clearing unless the bodies were buried in the woods. The underbrush is at this time so dense that it was with difficulty that we found the location. These graves are simply marked with rough headstones without any inscription whatever, of name, age, or date. This cemetery we can rightfully count among the oldest of the town. The McIntire families were among the very earliest settlers in this community, and without doubt used this in those early times. In only a few more years vestiges of it will be gone, if nothing is done by the town to mark this resting place of some of its founders.

There is also a tomb upon this same farm, in the rear of Mr. Horn's house, on the summit of McIntire Hill. It must have been built prior to this century. It contains several bodies. When the farm was owned by Varanus Johnson, a few years since, for private gratification he repaired the tomb some at his own expense. It will have to be repaired again at no distant day. In the absence of all known relatives, it would be an honorable task for the town to take it in charge.

THE CRANBERRY MEADOW YARD.

This yard was originally the burial place of four or five families in its neighborhood. It is situated on the west road to Spencer from Charlton Depot, and is a little over a mile from the depot. The north boundary of the yard is the town line between Spencer and Charlton. The land when it began as a burial place belonged to one David Hammond. It afterwards passed into the hands of his son-in-law, Simon Ward. The families for most part buried here are those of Charles Lamb, Simon Ward, Ebenezer White, and Reuben Newhall. We understand that Mr. Hammond gave the right of burial after it had been used for a long number of years as a cemetery, if these neighbors would put a wall around it. There never was much done to the lot until about 1830, when the wall was erected and a number of stones placed at the heads of the graves. Previous to this time there were no headstones, except the common flat field stones. The earliest marked grave denotes 1803, but we think that prior to that time there were burials. At present there are some 22 headstones, and are visible something like a dozen unmarked graves. Among the number of unmarked graves are those of the orignal donor of the land, and his wife. The yard is surrounded with pine woods and is enlosed with a stone wall. There are pine trees not a few within the enclosure. In this yard are buried Ebenezer White, who died in 1813; he was one of the early Baptists in town, and had an active influence in sustain

ing his church at the North Side Charles Lamb, died in 1843 at the age of 74; Reuben Newhall, died in 1858 at the age of 88.

THE MAJOR DANIEL WILLIAMS LOT.

This is pleasantly situated on the west side of the reservoir between the Depot and City, on land for a long time owned by Major Williams, and now owned by the Hammond brothers. It was made a burial place in 1791, on the death of a young daughter. This was the only grave here for nearly fifty years, when the Major and his wife were buried. The headstone records that Mr. Williams died July 6, 1838, aged 79 years, and that his wife, Marcy, died February 8, 1843, aged 75 years. Major Williams was a public spirited man and did much to encourage the schools of our town. He was a great friend of the youth, and is said to have frequently given many new copper cents to the boys and girls who proved worthy by study and deportment. This gift, though small in value, is still remembered by our older citizens. This burial place is surrounded with a good wall and nothing is about it to mar the mind in its contemplation.

THE HARVLIN TOWNE YARD

is near the Depot towards the City, in a small clump of pine trees. There is a tomb within the well enclosed yard, and has been kept in good repair. In the tomb are the remains of Mr. and Mrs. Towne, and near by are the graves of Daniel Williams and his wife Mary and their daughter Polly Williams, who died in 1875. Mr. and Mrs. Williams were the parents of Mrs. Towne. Daniel Williams died in 1815, and was first buried on the west side of the road towards the City from the tomb, a few rods up the side hill. When this yard was made his remains were removed.

Mr. Towne was station agent at the Depot from the time the railroad was built (1839) until his death (1869). He was also post-master, express agent, etc., which brought him much in contact with the people. In these positions he seems to have given satisfaction, if one is to judge by the length of service.

THE PUTNEY YARD.

This yard is generally known as the Barefoot Corner cemetery, and is in school district No. 10. The original owner of the land was Jonathan Putney, who gave the right of burial to his several neighbors, using it also for his own family. Mr. Putney died in 1814; the estate was then divided, the homestead falling to Mrs. Jacob Miller, who a few years after the death of Mr. Miller (1817) married George West. The Putneys, the Millers, the Wests and Searles are buried here, and are in one way and another relations of each other. The oldest marked grave is 1807. There are nearly one hundred graves yet only about fifty of them have headstones.

The Miller and West families have erected a fine monument here which will be for a memorial of their familes. In this yard there was, a half century ago, erected a tomb by three families who resided in that vicinity. The own-

ers of this tomb were Elijah and Elnathan McIntire (cousins), and Nathaniel Burden. Their families were placed in it until some over twenty bodies were within the tomb, when the descendants of Elnathan McIntire took the remains of their relatives out and buried them near by. The others still remain, and without a doubt will soon be buried and the tomb which for a long time has been in a decaying state will be taken down and the place leveled away.

In 1835 Mrs. George West, a daughter of Mr. Putney, the original owner, gave a deed of this lot of 116 rods of land to the town, with the right of way from it to the highway. Jonathan Putney was in the revolutionary war and came into this town on its close, from Salem. Nathaniel Burden, whose body was buried in the tomb, was also in the revolutionary war, and drew a pension from the government in his age. He died in 1849 at the extreme age of 97.

THE HARVEY DRESSER YARD

On Dresser Hill, but a short distance from the old Dresser homestead, is the burial yard of Harvey Dresser and family. Harvey Dresser died February 8, 1835, aged 46 years; his widow died a little over a year after, and they were soon followed by two sons and a daughter, who had nearly reached man and womanhood. The Dresser monument is of marble with an urn on its pinnacle. On this monument are the inscriptions of the family. In the same lot is the grave of Major Jerry Merritt, a brother of Mrs. Dresser, who had been in partnership with Mr. Dresser some fourteen years. He was the son of Captain Henry Merritt, and died in 1835, aged 39 years.

Harvey Dresser is still remembered in this community. He was an active, public spirited man. He engaged extensively in manufacturing wagons, chaises, etc., on Dresser Hill. In that day there was a large business carried on in that vicinity, but even in his last years the business was moving away to the water power of Southbridge and the large manufactories of Worcester. Mr. Dresser once owned a large factory in Southbridge. A brief sketch of his life is given in Ammidown's Historical Sketches, Vol. 2, also an engraving of him. This yard is in good order; the fence is of iron with stone posts. The deed of this burial lot is in the possession of Henry Willis, a nephew of Harvey Dresser, now living in Shelburne Falls, Mass.

THE FITTS BURIAL YARD.

This yard is in school district No. 6, toward a mile south of the school house on the road past the Advent church, on the old Caleb Fitts homestead, now owned by Jeremiah Haggerty. It is the burial lot of Caleb Fitts, together with some relatives and neighbors. The lot is about 30 by 50 feet, and some twenty-five rods from the road, opposite of the house. It contains thirteen graves, five of which are marked by headstones. The earliest one marked is 1831; so we infer that it was not far from that time that it was laid out. It is well surrounded by a stone wall, but

trees and bushes have grown up, owing to the moving away of those most interested. Those stones marked show that buried here are Caleb Fitts, who died February 5, 1841, aged 85 years, [his son Caleb was buried at Charlton center]; Rachel, wife of Caleb Fitts, [her maiden name was Patch], died November 14, 1831, aged 68 years; Tryphena Hall, died September 16, 1861, aged 86 years; Eltheusia, wife of Otis Darling, a daughter of Mrs. Tryphena Hall, died December 1, 1866, aged 56 years; Lois, wife of Stephen Belknap, [a sister of Mrs. Fitts], died May 17, 1845, aged 91 years; this stone was erected by Timothy Chase of Belfast, Maine, a son by a previous marriage. Among those whose graves are unmarked, we understand, one is a Leonard Fitts, and another a Theodore Hall, who was drowned in one of the ponds of the town.

THE MIXTER BURIAL YARD.

The Mixter homestead is the house now owned and occupied by Albert Stevens. The Mixter property is possessed by several in that neighborhood The burial place of the family is some ten rods from the house, back a little from the road. It is enclosed by a wall and some trees are in the enclosure There are three headstones marking four graves. and there are some six graves unmarked. On one stone is inscribed, Mr. Ezra Mixter died December 30, 1829, aged 75 years; Azurbale, his wife, died March 3, 1816, aged 58 years. The remaining two stones mark the resting place of Rufus Mixter, Esq., and his first wife. They are inscribed, Rufus Mixter died March 19, 1845, aged 61 years; Anna, wife of Rufus Mixter, died March 29, 1821, aged 22 years. The remaining graves, without doubt, are members of the early families. Rufus Mixter, Esq., was a prominent man in town affairs, holding many official positions with credit to himself and the town.

THE JOSEPH MARTIN YARD.

The Joseph Martin farm is on the road leading south, just this side of Buffinsville, something like a half mile. In the yard upon this farm there are but two graves, children of Joseph and Mary Martin, who died in 1827 and 1830 respectively. There is a tombstone at each grave. These graves are to the northeast of the ancient house in an open meadow, some fifteen rods from the road.

THE CHASE BURIAL PLACE.

This burial place is on the farm now owned by John Davis, known as the Fletcher Farm, a mile south of Parker School House on the Dudley road. It is some seventy-five rods from the road, back of the house, and some five rods from an arm of the Baker Pond, upon a slight knoll of ground. This description is given, and should any one try to find it even with this, he would have to look sharp or he would miss it. If there ever was a fence about it, it is now, and has been for long years, rotted down. The mounds are almost obliterated which should go to show that it was ever a burial place. From inspection we should say it was

eighteen feet square and contains some five graves. These graves are of members of the Chase family, who were among the early settlers of Charlton From the information we can gain we would say that Eleazer Chase and wife, their son Timothy, who lost his leg in the Revolutionary war, and two children of this Timothy Chase, were those buried at this place. The dates of their death we have not learned, nor their ages, but they must have died previous to this century. Just over the town line in Dudley is a Chase burial place, whom, we infer, were the children of this Eleazer Chase. In the deeds given of this place there is a reservation of this plot of ground, but in only a few more years and all traces of it will pass from view.

THE CAPT. JONATHAN TUCKER YARD.

This burial place is on the Spencer road leading north from Millward school house some ten rods from the highway. In this yard there are but two graves, one in memory of Mrs. Martha, wife of Capt. Jonathan Tucker, who died Nov. 23, 1774, aged 64 years. Near by is that of Capt. Tucker, though there is no marked headstone. The flat is surrounded by a wall with two pine trees within it. Capt. Tucker was a man of prominence in town. He was chairman of the selectmen for some years after that section called the "gore" was definitely fixed to the town.

THE CAPT. JESSE SMITH YARD.

This yard was formerly a part of the Jesse Smith property now owned by Wm. D. Warren, and is a few rods from the highway leading to Rochdale, near the juncture of the road leading to Mr. Warren's house. Capt. Smith gave the yard to the town in 1826, not long before he died. Mr. Smith died June 21, 1826, aged 68 years, and his widow died in 1848. Capt. Smith was a soldier of the revoiution. Their remains together with the remains of his mother are within a well sealed tomb upon this land. At a former time there were many burials here, but one after another the bodies have been removed so that now but few remain, and some of these are soon to be removed. The poor of the town whose remains are unclaimed by the relatives have been buried in one portion of the yard, since it came in possession of the land.

This Capt. Smith's family had no children of their own, so they brought up one Jesse Smith Warren who was heir to the estate, and in turn our esteemed citizen, Wm. S. Warren, received it from his father. Capt. Smith at one time gave a bell to the church at the North-side, on the present site of the school-house, then occupied by the Baptists and Universalists. This bell was cracked on one occasion and was re-cast; which bell is still in use by the school at that place. Mr. Smith also gave a generous donation to the Millward school district of $1000, the interest to be used for repairing the building and for giving extra schooling to the youth of that district. It has been enjoyed by the youth for a half-century and no doubt has done much benefit.

CHARLTON CITY YARD.

The Charlton City yard is a proprietary one. The citizens in that locality felt the need of a new yard just before the war, hence they united together for the purpose of purchasing land and laying out lots. The company at the outset composed of twenty-eight citizens, was organized May 20, 1856 into the Charlton City Union Cemetery company under the law passed in legislature March 17, 1841. Simeon Lamb, Esq., as justiceof peace called the meeting and gave legality to the same. Simeon Lamb, Esq , was the moderator of the meeting and has been of every annual meeting with one exception. Washington W. White was made secretary of the company, which office he has held to the present time. On the forming of the company, land was purchased of Nathan Walker, and soon laid out into lots under the direction of the trustees. When the company was well under way they answered to the call of the public in building a vault. This tomb was erected by one Horace Prince in 1859. For the first year or two Francis Ryan acted as sexton, since then however, that office has been filled by Seth Carpenter. In 1864 the company received by the will of Benj. Wallis, the sum of $300 to be used in beautifying the place. The company is well organized, and it is for its members to make a beautiful yard. It can be done, but will take means and labor to do it. The members of it can well afford it. It will abundantly repay in only a few years The public have very genorously patronized this cemetery and it needs but a public spirit to advance its interest farther. The first burials in this yard were the bodies of Waldo Walis, and a Miss Thayer, who were interred the same day. In 1869 a new fence was built about the yard which added much to the appearance of the place. The meetings of the corporation have ever been held in the vestry of the Methodist church. An accurate survey of the yard was made in 1872 by R. B. Dodge, Esq. In perusing the records of the corporation we find that many have neglected their financial obligations to it. This ought not to be; if a lot is taken, the lot should be paid for and a deed given, taken and recorded the same as in other business transactions. The corporation no doubt would be ill thought of if they prosecuted their claims once in a while, but self-protection may call for it in time. The following is the list of trustees for the present year: Simeon Lamb, David R. Dodge, Erastus Winslow, Jonas Bemis, Elijah R. Carpenter, Jeremiah Newton, Charles D. White.

The following are the By-Laws of the City Union Cemetery Company, adopted May 20, 1856, they being reported to the corporation by Simeon Lamb, Esq., Wm. B. Olds and Hiram Willis—a committee chosen for that purpose:

Article I.

At every annual meeting of the corporation the owners of the lots duly qualified to vote shall elect by ballot five or more trustees—all of whom shall be members of the corporation; and a clerk and treasurer, who shall be one of said trustees, to hold their

respective offices for one year and until an election shall have taken place in which they or others shall have been chosen and qualified; and said clerk shall be sworn to the faithful performance of the duties of his office.

ARTICLE II.

The trustees at their meeting next following the annual meeting of the corporation, shall elect one from their number to be president. In all meetings of the trustees and corporation, in case of his absence, the senior trustee there present shall preside; and in case no trustee is present at a meeting of the corporation a moderator shall be chosen by ballot.

ARTICLE III.

The trustees shall have the management, superintendence and care of the property, expenditure and prudential concerns of the corporation; may appoint all necessary agents, and shall at every annual meeting present a full report in writing of the state of the funds, property, and affairs of the corporation, with such remarks and recommendations as they may think useful.

ARTICLE IV.

The clerk shall record in a book to be kept for the purpose the doings of the trustees' corporation — all reports in writing presented to either and such matters as he shall be directed by the trustees to enter.

ARTICLE V.

The books, papers, money and all other property of the corporation shall be delivered over by the trustees, clerk and treasurer respectively to their successors.

ARTICLE VI.

The annual meeting of the corporation shall be held in the month of March or April in each year, at such time and place in the town of Charlton as the treasurer for the time being shall appoint. Notice of all meetings of the corporation shall be given by the clerk by a notice in writing, posted up in some conspicuous place within the City school district in Charlton, seven days at least before the time of holding the same. Special meetings of the corporation shall be called by the trustees upon request made to them in writing by eight or more proprietors; and in the notice thereof the object of the meeting shall be expressed. At all meetings five proprietors shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VII.

Every deed of any lot or part of a lot in the cemetery shall be recorded by the clerk in a book provided for the purpose.

ARTICLE VIII.

The treasurer shall, ten days at least previous to the annual meeting of the corporation, report in writing to the trustees a detailed account of all receipts and expenditures of the investments and of other matters connected with this department.

ARTICLE IX.

The trustees shall fix the price of the lots and no lot shall be less than two hundred square feet of surface; and the original deed thereof shall be executed by the president of the proprietors, who is hereby authorized to execute the same.

ARTICLE X.

A receiving tomb shall be erected in which may be placed the body of any proprietor or person of his household, and others by the consent of the trustees whenever the season or other circumstances render it necessary or expedient. But the body shall not remain in said tomb more than six months without a special permit from the trustees.

ARTICLE XI.

Every proprietor of a lot or part of a lot in order to entitle himself to the privilege of a member of the corporation shall procure his deed, to be recorded in the book of the corporation and signify his assent to the charter and by-laws by subscribing his name in a book to be kept by the clerk for that purpose.

ARTICLE XII.

No one but a proprietor of a lot shall be eligible as trustee, and the removal of any person from the town of Charlton shall vacate his office.

ARTICLE XIII.

It shall be the duty of the clerk whenever directed by the trustees to prosecute any person offending against the act of incorporation for the protection of cemeteries, passed Feb. 23, 1841.

ARTICLE XIV.

Vacancies occurring in any office may be filled at a special meeting of the corporation.

ARTICLE XV.

The books of the records of the corporation shall be considered evidence of the titles and rights of the proprietors so far as the entries therein relate thereto.

ARTICLE XVI.

The By-laws may be altered at any annual meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the proprietors.

DRESSER HILL PUBLIC YARD.

This yard is one of the oldest in the town. Through the thoughtfulness of

an older citizen we are permitted to know the exact date of its beginning as a repose for the dead. The first grave was that of James, a young son of Lieut. John Dresser, who died in May, 1745. Lieut. Dresser gave the right of burial in this lot to his neighbors. The stone which is placed at the head of the first grave was placed by one Aaron Dresser, a great grandson of the original donor, who knew the place of burial and the date. He was a man of historical turn of mind, and bore in mind many reminiscences which he received from those older. This yard, however, has ever been private property until 1868 when George Thompson gave a deed of it to the town and a right of way to the highway, in consideration that the town would maintain the fence and the two gates leading to it. Prior to 1868 it was in the deed of the farm now owned by George Thompson though with a reservation that it was to be used as a public burial place, and that the owner was permitted to mow the grass, or pasture the same with sheep, or such stock as would not deface the premises. This yard comprises an acre of ground. It was an excellent labor in Mr. Thompson to deed it to the town, and the community at large have many thanks to give Mr. Thompson for the manner in which the yard has been kept for some forty years. The land is in good repair, it is pleasantly situated, though it may be inconvenient to reach, It contains about 160 head stones, but there are many more burials. This yard is the resting place of many of the pioneer of the town in that vicinity. In this yard are buried the Dressers, the Bloods, the Chamberlains, the Cleavlands, the Conants, the Clemences and Fessendons, and many others of less numerous families. Many who are buried here had an extensive influence in the early affairs of our town, and to them we owe much for their energy and zeal in preparing the way for us.

Capt Richard Dresser, the "District clerk" [Town] for some years at the formation of the town, died August 27, 1797 aged 82 years.—Lieut. John Dresser the owner of the ground died January 24, 1789 aged 73.—By the records of the town we learn that John Dresser Jr. was chosen "grave digger for the South burial place" March 7, 1770. Also at the town meeting held April 14, 1808, Moses Dresser Jr. was voted sexton for the South burial place.

CHARLTON NORTH-SIDE CEMETERY.

Concerning the origin of this yard we are as yet in the dark. It is on the land which orignally belonged to the Wheelock family, who settled in that section. The north part of the town was quite thickly settled at an early date, hence we think if the date be found it would confirm our impression that this is one of the oldest burial places in the town. The land may have been given by Jonathan Wheelock, and permissions for burials continued by Mr. John Wheelock, who died in 1816. The heirs of John Wheelock gave further permission for the enlarging of the

yard, and it was only a few years since that it passed into the full possession of the town. Since that time an enlargement has taken place, and the grounds repaired and beautified. A little outlay of time and means every season would make this a beautiful yard. Of late years there have been some new monuments which have added much to the general appearance. Among them can we especially mention the Bacon monument, erected by the descendents of Deacon Daniel Bacon who died in 1813. Also the Levi Hammond monument, and the one in the family lot of our citizen Samuel Rich. In this yard are buried the Lambs, the Bacons, the Hammonds, the Stones, the Wheelocks, the Davis', the Tuckers, the Marbells, the Williams' and Pratts. And in the back part of the cemetery there are many unmarked graves. If we could only know the names of those buried there no doubt we would find many names among us of to-day. It is a sorry fact that so many of our early prominent citizens have unmarked graves. The earliest marked grave we found in the yard was that of Mrs. Esther Hammond, in 1762, the first wife of Ebenezer Hammond, the grandfather of our aged citizen Samuel Hammond. There must have been earlier burials than this.

Capt. Israel Waters who died in 1823, was buried here. He carried on quite an extensive tannery at the North-Side. The monument over his remains bears this inscription: "Erected by the Trustees of Leicester Academy, as a token of respect to the deceased for his great liberality to that Institution." David Dunbar, a soldier of the Revolution, is also buried here. He was quite a prominent man in all church work of this locality. In 1825, when General La-Fayette made his tour through the States, he was greeted by Mr. Dunbar, an old friend and companion in arms, in words of hearty welcome. Mr. Dunbar died quite suddenly on New Year's eve, 1827, at the age of 80 years. Ebenezer Davis finds a resting place in this cemetery. At the time of his death he was among, if not the wealthiest, landholder in Worcester county. He was in the French war, and during a portion of the Revolutionary war supplied a portion of the army, at various points, with beef. He was an intelligent man and ever active for the interests of the town. He held many offices of trust in the gift of the people. He was one of the founders of the Baptist church at the North-Side; and in 1779, being converted to Universalism, became one of the early and earnest advocates of it in Charlton. Accounts of Mr. Davis are found in Ammidown's Historical Sketch of Charlton, and in George Davis' Historical Sketches of Sturbridge and Southbridge. He died in 1816 at the age of 79.

Elder James Boomer, so long pastor of the Baptist church, lies buried in this yard. He became a resident of Charlton in 1804, and lived here until his death in 1837. He is spoken of by aged citizens as being an earnest, hard-working man, who, to gain a livelihood, labored on week days on his farm, and on Sunday preaching in the church at

North-Side and elsewhere. His daughter, Mrs. Ruhimah Hammond, is still living at the Hammond homestead in town, at the age of 80 years. The following is the inscription upon the tombstone of Elder Boomer: "Rev. James Boomer, died February 25, 1837, aged 78 years. The gospel that he preached to others was his support in sickness and in death. To my children, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children.

God has laid up in Heaven for me
A crown which cannot fade,
The Righteous Judgment at that great day
Will place it on my head.

THE CHARLTON CENTRE YARD.

From a vote found in the town records of March 12th 1764, it was decided to accept an acre of ground "a little south-east of Ebenezer McIntire's barn," for a yard for the district to bury therein their dead. This yard was needed. This hill was declared by a commission selected by the town to be the centre of the town; and the citizens thought it proper to have a place in close proximity to bury their dead. The other yards were too far distant Mr. McIntire had previously given land for the town church; and now again he was prompt in being generous. He gave land at the outset on the road leading west to Rev. Warren Fiske's, just in the rear of the residence of Wm. A. Weld. The first grave was dug for a little child, a baby brother of Joel Parker, who died some years since quite aged. When the time came to bury the child, the grave was filled with water; and on consultation it was thought advisable to change the location; thereupon, Mr. McIntire offered another acre of land on the east side of the road, the present north-west corner of the yard. This account of the first grave and change of locations came to the author, from Mr. Albert McKinstry of Southbridge, who received it from one, who received it from Mrs. Madden a sister of Ebenezer McIntire. This first thought of plot of ground is still quite springy, and damp though cultivation has improved it much.

The original acre of the present cemetery was soon filled with graves, and in 1810 or '12 an enlargement was needed. The original road from Oxford came directly up the hill, near the road from Dudley to the road leading west from the Congregational church, hence the house of Mrs. Clarissa Case was on one of the four corners. On the north-west corner of these four, stood the tavern of Ebenezer McIntire, which was the great resort for all the citizens. For some reason, prior to this century, this road from the east was changed, bearing to the south-west, and entering the highway leading south near the plain entrance of the present cemetery. To enlarge the cemetery required a change in this road once more, therefore the road was closed from the present lower entrance, and the highway was made the north boundary of the original acre, as it is today. The cemetery was enlarged on the south and east sides, the south boundary being near the main front entrance. The remains of this high-

way through the cemetery are quite visible today. To the original acre, there were two entrances, one midway in front, and the lower one just back of the first tomb. At the time of this enlargement, there must have been quite an interest in the yard. At this time Daniel Alexander erected a tomb for his wife, who had died two or three years previous. This was the first tomb, and is nearest the road. Mr. Alexander died in 1831 aged 89. The tomb now is in the care of Mrs. Joshua Vinton of Dudley. In 1812 Mr. Rufus Wakefield, a brother in law of Gibbs Dodge, Esq., took a contract to build eight tombs for prominent citizens in town. They were built altogether and in the same manner with the exception of two or three doors. These tombs belonged to Salem Towne; Wm. S. Welds; Gen. John Spurr; John Stevens; John Rich; and two other families whose names were not inscribed upon the doors. A few years later on the death of his wife in 1819, Mr. Gibbs Dodge, built another tomb, which makes the full complement of tombs. That one owned by Wm. S. Welds was sold to Harvlin Towne, in part, for the entombing of his father and mother, though he, as we have stated built for himself a tomb near the depot.

The old families buried in the yard at the Centre are numerous. They are among the upright ones of the town, We can name the Phillips, the Nichols, the Harwoods, the McIntires, the Townes, the Welds, the Marbles, the Ryders, the Wards, the Burdens, the Fays, the Spurrs, the Stones, the Fitts, the Willards, the Meritts, the Goodales, the Bartons, the Richs, the Woodburys the Wakefields, the Stevens, the Bullins, the Comins and Lamsons. There are many more whom we might notice but whose families were not so numerous.

Rev. Caleb Courtis the first town minister is buried in this yard. He was settled over this town from 1762 to 1776. He was quite an active, public spirited man, and in those spirited times often came in contact with the minds of others. After the dismissal from the pastorate he remained a citizen of the town until his death in 1802. During the Shay rebellion he took a zealous part, and we understand suffered a brief imprisonment in consequence. He represented the town in the provincial congress at Watertown in 1775.

One fact is strange that after the generous deeds of Ebenezer McIntire, we who are enjoying the blessings of our common and other gifts of his are not permitted to know the whereabouts of his resting place. The tradition among his descendents is that it was in the first tier of graves fronting the road leading to the south, acting upon this, his descendents have staked out some unmarked graves and an unclaimed lot, as the one most probably which belonged to the Ebenezer McIntire family. And after this warning has been give for a sufficient time, and the plat is not claimed positively by any one else, we learn that a

monument will be erected to the memory of the donor of the cemetery and the common.

SOME OF CHARLTON'S EPITAPHS.

There are in the various cemeteries of the town epitaphs of which we will make record. We claim for them no exceptional merit; we may say they are such as can be found in almost all ancient yards. These epitaphs, I presume, were designed to express a sentiment found in the heart of the one it commemorates, or it was given to inspire a hope in the reader and passer-by, and often we may well think to give utterance to the theology of the family. There are many beautiful designs on the tombstones here in Charlton as elsewhere. The rosebush, the broken branch, the doves, the upward, indexed hand and finger, all of these have a meaning, and offer plentiful suggestions to the frequenter of the repose of the dead. They should make us more thoughtful regarding our life, and more hopeful in the God "who giveth and who taketh away." We cannot give all the epitaphs—we omit many Some of those given are found in many places elsewhere, and others are purely original. As this kind of literature, by virtue of its inscriptions, become public, common property, we can quote with entire freedom:

Behold, and see as you pass by,
As you are now, so once was I,
As I am now so you must be,
Prepare for death, and follow me.

Rest, loved one, rest, thy suffering is o'er,
Thy parting look is given
We see thee here on earth no more,
But thou dost rest in Heaven

Ye mourning friends, approach your God,
His grace can give relief,
The hand which wounds, can also heal
And soften every grief.

What art thou, death, that I should fear
The shadow of a shade,
What's in thy name to meet the ear
Of which to be afraid?
Thou art not care, thou art not pain,
But thou art rest and peace;
'Tis thou canst make our terrors cease

I shall know her there. Oh! it cannot be
In the Spirit Land she'll be lost to me;
That the holiest ties that God has given
To bind us here, will be lost in Heaven.
My star of faith shines clear and fair,
When I look above I shall know her there,
Though the angel's robe and crown she'll wear,
By the song she sings I shall know her there

Let faith and hope assuage your grief,
And be your hearts resigned,
For all who wait upon the Lord
Shall consolation find.

Shed not for me the bitter tear,
Nor give the heart to vain regret,
'Tis but the casket that lies here,
The gem that filled it sparkles yet.

Naked as from the earth we've come
And crept to life at first,
We to the earth return again
And mingle with the dust.

Though greedy worms devour my skin
And gnaw my waiting flesh,
When God shall build my bones again
He'll clothe them afresh.

Mourn ye, dear ones, for the spirit that's gone,
And would ye reclaim it thus hastening on?
No! happier far is the brother that's gone
Than the spirits detained in a dark world like this.
Then with hearts fixed on Heaven,
Oh, may we prepare
To meet him in glory and happiness there.

Great God, I owe thy sentence just,
And nature must decay
I yield my body to the dust
To dwell with fellow clay.

The following is on the gravestone of two wives erected by the surviving husband. Without criticism we will say it found its way ito the "Editor's Drawer" of *Harper's Monthly* a number of years ago:

As I pass by
With grief I see,
Here lies the mates
That's took from me.

In the cemetery at the centre of the town is buried John Adams, or we may give the name by which he is known over the land, "Grizzley" Adams. He was a native of Charlton, though for long years he was in the extreme West, where he became famous for his bear hunting and bear taming. P. T. Barnum at last secured him, and Mr. Adams and his bears joined the great museum. There is an account of him in the "Life of P. T. Barnum," though Mr. Barnum gives his name incorrectly. He died in 1860, aged 48 years. On the tombstone erected there is sculptured a man, evidently designed for Mr. Adams, in a hunting suit, surrounded by bears. The epitaph upon the stone is from "The Funeral Tree of Sokokis," a poem by Mr Whittier, though it has been slightly altered. It reads as follows:

And silent now the hunter lays,
Sleep on, brave tenant of the wilds,
Great Nature owns her simple child,
And Nature's God, to whom alone
The secrets of the heart are known,
In silence whispers that his work is done

At a town meeting held May 2, 1808, Comins Litchfield was elected sexton for the middle of the town, for the year ensuing. Mr. Litchfield held this office for twenty-six years, ending with sickness and death. Mr. Litchfield made all the coffins of the town in his day and had the oversight of most all the funerals. He was a man much liked by the citizens and was well fitted by his genial and sympathetic ways for this office. At the March meeting of 1810 we find this vote: "Voted to grant the petition of Comins Litchfield and others for the purpose of building a new hearse, and a suitable harness for said hearse, and a suitable building for the safe keeping of the same, and likewise to procure a new burying-cloth." Capt. Thos. Farnum, Capt. Free Comins and Maj. Salem Towne were appointed a committee to purchase the same. The new hearse house which was at this time voted, stood upon the northwest corner of the cemetery at the Center, and on the plot of ground now held by the family of Capt. Comins Litchfield. It was removed from this place to a spot farther south, and the spot upon which it stood was secured by Mr. Litchfield, who had so long faithfully served the town as sexton. The hearse which was cast aside by this new one it still dimly remembered by our aged people. It was simply two wheels with two long shafts, drawn by a single horse whose harness consisted of one of those large English saddles, with chains suspended over it to hold up these shafts Upon the axle and shafts was an open platform on which the coffin was carried. After the coffin was once upon the platform and securely fastened, a black pall or burying cloth was thrown over it and pinned about the head. The use of the burial-pall was continued for some years after, as a new one was purchased by order of this same town meeting. The new hearse here spoken of we infer to be the one, the body of which is used at present on runners, though it has undergone many repairs.

Upon the retirement of Mr. Litchfield, Leonard Towne was selected for the position of sexton, which position he held for twenty-five years, ceasing in 1859 when age made it difficult for him to expose himself in all kinds of weather. Since that time the office has been held by Thompson McIntire and others. At present Chauncey Nickols is serving well and faithfully the public in this capacity. While Mr. McIntire was sexton the town needed a larger and better hearse house—having purchased a much better hearse—and built the present hearse house; and the old one was purchased by Mr. McIntire, who conveyed it to Charles E. Morse, and is now used as a wood-shed to one of his tenant houses.

THE COST OF FUNERALS.

We have seen the private account book of Comins Lichfield, sexton of the town from 1808 to 1834. He not only was sexton but he had the labor of making most all of the coffins and superintending almost everything about the funerals of his time. This private account reveals almost the entire expense of the funerals of those days. Comparing the cost of funerals then with the cost of to-day we find quite a difference. The wealthiest men of our town, though able to purchase the best materials did not have costly funerals compared with our funerals of to-day, yet theirs were the costliest known in our communities. Without mentioning the names we can say that the expenses of the funerals of our wealthiest men, dying between the above dates, did not exceed sixteen dollars. This includes the very best kind of a coffin, which means a "cherry" coffin, with the initials and age of the deceased placed upon the lid by means of brass-headed nails; the use of the horse to draw the hearse, the digging of the grave and pay of the sexton for his time. This truly seems a small sum compared with the expenses of to-day. This account book is in the keeping of Mrs. Rachel M. Blackman, a daughter of Sibley Barton, the second wife of Captain Comins Lichfield, who is still living, though at an advanced age, in Charlton.

THE MORTALITY OF CHARLTON.

The greatest number of deaths in any one year was fifty-four, in the year 1813. There was a "prevailing fever" in our midst which carried off many of our best people; this disease is described by our older people to be short, the sickness rarely being more than a week and in almost all cases provedfatal. It was in many respects like the pneumonia of to-day. The least number of deaths within this century was in 1876, the number being only 16; in 1820 there were only 18, and the same in 1829. We have examined the records of the town for the past 34 years, from that time which the State more rigidly enforced the keeping of records; in these 34 years there has been 1069 deaths, being an average of 31 plus; in the year 1863 the number was 47, in which year a good number of children died of diphtheria, and several died from wounds received in the army; the year previous diphtheria raged some-

what. The year 1876 was the healthiest, judging from the mortality record. This period reaches from 1844 to 1877 inclusive, and out of the 1069 who died 300 reached the age of 70, or nearly 1 out of every 4 passed their seventieth birthday; there have been 140 who have reached their 80th year, or 1 out of every 8 passed their 80th birthday; there were 22 whose years were above 90, or 1 out of every 50. We have not found any who had reached their 100th year, though there might have been in those years in which we have not thoroughly searched; the oldest whom we found was Mrs. Bethany Reynolds, aged 98 years. There was one George Pike, a great-uncle of Stillman Pike, who reached the age of 97 years and 10 months, and died in 1850; there was another, Nathaniel Burden (a son, Cyrus, is still living at an advanced age) who died in 1849, aged 97 years and 10 months. These three are the oldest. In 1875 there were 31 deaths, and the average age was 66 years and 7 months. The ages of the residents average good, which shows the healthfulness of the town, and we have no reason to fear if we care for the health of the mind and soul as God cares for the healthfulness of our bodies by giving us the free air of these hills.

THE SPURR FUND.

Our burial yard at Charlton Centre has been privileged to enjoy the thoughtfulness of one of Charlton's noblest sons. In the early years of the war Thomas Jefferson Spurr, in common with many of our land, joined the army to bear its privations and suffer its hardships that the honor and unity of our nation might be preserved. He was a son of Samuel D. Spurr, who died Nov. 3, 1842, aged 42, and a grandson of Gen. John Spurr—who held a prominent influence in the interests of our town. Young Spurr was, also, a grandson of Dr. Dan. Lamb, so long a physician of Charlton. A further account of this young man is found in "Worcester in the War," an excellent book of local reminiscence. The inscription upon the tomb stone is, "Thomas Jefferson, only son Samuel D. and Mary A. Spurr, 1st Lieut. 15th Reg. Mass. Vol. Wounded in battle of Antietam, Sept. 17; died at Hagarstown, Sept. 27, 1862, aged 24 years." The remains of Mr. Spurr were secured and are now reposing in the lot of the family. The selectmen of Charlton were notified of the will and its conditions by the brother-in-law of Mr. Spurr, Senator Geo. F. Hoar. The town accepted the fund, the interest of which has been wisely expended according to the condition of the will. It would, however, add much to the credit of the town to appropriate moneys once in a while to further the same general design of this fund. The following is that portion of the will which refers to this fund:

I give and bequeath to the town of Charlton in Massachusetts the sum of five hundred dollars, on condition that the same be invested carefully and that the income thereof shall annually be spent—first in taking care of the lot in the burying ground in the centre of said town where the body of my father, (Samuel D. Spurr) was buried, so that the grass, trees, stones, and fence be kept in good repair and condition;

—second, if there is any surplus, that the same shall be used for making improvements and for ornamenting the burying grounds;—third, that any surplus remaining shall be used for improving and ornamenting the common, so called, in the centre of said town.

THE HOBBS BURIAL PLACE.

The discussion of the cemeteries of Charlton has brought to light a cemetery which the author of these sketches did not know. It is in the northwest corner of Charlton. Mr. Amasa Hobbs, who has taken great interest in these sketches, writes the author as follows regarding it:

"The land was given by Josiah Hobbs in the year 1817, expecting the Universalist church, which now stands in the edge of Brookfield, would be built there, or quite near; but owing to a disagreement the church was not built there, and consequently there were but six buried on the grounds,the following are the names: Lydia Hobbs, wife of Nathan Hobbs, and mother of Josiah Hobbs, who died September, 1817; Barnwells and Lucena Hobbs died September, 1817,children of Josiah Hobbs; and Charles and Warren Hobbs, who died in May, 1822, children of Israel Hobbs; no headstones were ever placed over the graves. The land is now owned by Henry Stone, who lives at the four corners just south of the Podunk church. To find this burial place you turn in the field just south of Henry Stone's house, and go east, but I doubt if any one not acquainted with the place could find the spot."

AN OBITUARY.

We give here an obituary of one of the early families of Charlton; it will prove of interest to the many members of this scattered family. We have copies of other obituaries of prominent persons in the long ago times, but at this writing we are unable to find them. This obituary is from the Worcester *Spy* of March 3, 1813. Deacon Bacon was prominent in the work of the Baptist church, he, with his wife, having united themselves to this church on February 26, 1767; they were the first who were received into the church under the "new form" namely, "the laying on of hands" by the deacons was omitted from the service. His son Deacon Daniel Bacon, Jr.; died in 1834 and was buried at the Centre, while Deacon Daniel Bacon, Sr., is buried at Northside.

"In Charlton, on the 10th ult., Mrs Mary Bacon, aged 75 years, and within forty-four hours afterwards, Deacon Daniel Bacon, her husband, aged 77 years, of the epidemic which pervades in that place. Their remains were carried to the meeting house the Sabbath following, where a discourse was delivered by Elder James Boomer, from Luke 23-xxviii. They were conveyed away and buried in one grave. They were both professors of the religion of Christ and maintained a confident and well supported character of piety. Their faith being lively and operative, was productive of good works and adorned every branch of their duty; without saying more it may be remarked that their lives furnished the strongest argument in favor of the reality, importance and divinity of religion; the strongest unbeliever could not look upon them in their last sickness and disease, their christian calmness and submission without sighing the wish: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'"

It is thus that we have briefly sketched the burial places of Charlton.

We do not claim that we have stated all which could be stated, but we have published this much that nothing which we have gathered may be lost. It has been a pleasure.

Charlton has a history—it only needs to be gathered. This can be done, little at a time, and at no distant day many incidents, dates and reminiscences would have been preserved. This article is the closing one of the series upon cemeteries, though as we have other notes we shall continue these sketches for a few weeks longer. The remaining ones may be fragmentary, yet we trust they will be interesting to the citizens of Charlton.

In closing this series, howeyer, permit a few suggestions: Time surely wastes the world away. Less than seventy-five years have passed since the tombs in our town were built—solid and enduring, the builders thought; yet, where are they today. My word is —don't erect any more tombs. The wasting hand of time wears even the best cut stone; therefore, obtain good solid substantial stones and place them above the bodies of your relations. If you strive for fancy carving and ornamentation, the time will come when regrets will be yours aud those who follow you. Have such a care for your lots that being left alone they will be able to care for themselves; for the world too soon grows careless over the remains of earlier generations. Remember the dead—not for grief or sorrow, but to prepare our way for the way marked out for the steps of all wearing mortal forms.

WHITNEY'S
HISTORY OF CHARLTON,
WITH NOTES.

[We republish a history of which the original edition is quite scarce and valuable. The history is of the various towns in Worcester county, and was written by Peter Whitney, A. M., minister of the gospel in Northborough, in said county; printed at Worcester, by Isaiah Thomas in 1793. The book is full of reminiscence and of historical value. We reprint that part relating to Charlton, with brief notes:]

This town was taken wholly [1] from Oxford, and was the westerly part thereof. It was incorporated November 2d, 1754, and then received its present name. [2]

As much of the land in Charlton lies in the hands of the original proprietors, its settlement was greatly retarded for many years. However, in April, 1761, the Congregational church here was imbodied, and the Rev. Caleb Curtis was solemnly ordained to the work of the gospel ministry in this place on the 15th of October, 1761. He continued their pastor fifteen years, and was dismissed from his office by a mutual council October 29th, 1776. The people remained destitute of a settled pastor upwards of six years, until January 8th, 1783, when the Rev. Archibald Campbell was installed their pastor. This Mr. Campbell was ordained pastor of the church and congregation in Easton, in the county of Bristol, on the 17th of August, 1763, where he continued nineteen years, being dismissed from his pastoral relation to that people August 11th, 1782. Mr. Campbell continued in the pastoral office in Charlton until April 9th, 1793, when he was dismissed by council, at his special request.

There is a large Anabaptist church

1.—There is a section of Charlton once called the "gore" which did not belong to Oxford; it was ceded to Charlton in 1757.

2.—It is supposed that this town takes its name from Sir Francis Charlton, a member of the Privy Chamber, England, about the time this section was set off from the town of Oxford, in 1754; or else it derived its name from King Charles. Charlestown was thus named; and to avoid having letters and packages missent and other inconveniences caused the citizens of Charleston (S. C.) dropped the "w" which gave them their present name. It might have been in such way that other letters were dropped and gave us our name. However the name came we are not ashamed of it.

and society in this town, but at present they are destitute of a settled minister, as well as the Congregational church and society.

We proceed to a topographical description of Charlton.

This town was not in high repute at first, and was thought by some to be hardly worth settling upon; as it was very rough in its natural state and hard to subdue. But such land is almost always found to be strong and to wear well. This being the case with Charlton, from small beginnings and an inconsiderable figure, it has risen up in the space of thirty or forty years, to renown among the towns of the county. It is computed to be nearly seven miles square, being much larger in extent than Oxford from whence it was taken, and in general a better tract of land. The people are become very numerous, [3] there being 1965 souls in the place when the census was taken in the year 1791, which is more by several hundreds than any town in the county, except Brookfield, Sutton and Worcester, and it is become exceedingly wealthy—as in the last state tax there were but six towns which paid more. There are three hundred dwelling houses in the town. The people subsist chiefly by the cultivation of the earth; and they have great encouragement to labor, for the soil is strong and rich and the lands are fertile and very productive. Here they raise grains of all kinds in plenty; beef and pork are fatted; butter and cheese are made in quantities equal to, if not surpassing, any other town in the county. The lands are well and naturally adapted to orcharding and fruit of all kinds. The hills are moist and springy; the hills and valleys are well proportioned and agreeably interspersed. The town is well watered by springs, brooks and rivulets, none of which claim particular mention. But there is one large river [4] in the western part of the town, near to Sturbridge, which runs from the north to the south, and is called Quinebaug. This river is almost an inconceivable advantage, not to Charlton only, but to many adjacent towns, by supplying great plenty of water for all the mills and water works in the dryest seasons. On this river, within the limits of Charlton, there are some rich interval and good meadow lands.

There are several hills in this town

3.—The population of Charlton increased from its beginning until 1820, when it reached 2134, notwithstanding the loss of inhabitants in ceding a portion of its territory in 1816, to make a portion of the present Southbridge. The few years previous to 1820 it enjoyed a prosperity it never did in any other decade. Business of all kinds was lively, and a spirit manifested in public improvement seldom seen. In 1830 there were more inhabitants, but the public spirit was not so quickened.

4.—The southwest portion of Charlton was made a portion of Southbridge in 1816. Marcy's mill was the chief attraction. For a long number of years the people in this section desired to be separated from Charlton, and make a town for themselves. One of the great bones of contention was the building and repairing of the bridge at Marcy's mill. Almost every year the freshets would do more or less damage and the people in the central, northern and eastern parts of the town, not having much to do in that section, suffered them to use frequently a neglected bridge; the people in the vicinity of the bridge who used it all the time were in the minority and could not secure the needed yearly appropriations. The question of a division of the town was agitated a score or more of years before it was effected.

worthy of mention—one by the name of Ponnakin; [5] another called Mashymuggett; [6] this is high, for on its summits buildings in about twelve adjacent towns may be discerned. This hill is situated about three-quarters of a mile from the Congregational meeting house. There is a third, known by the name of Blood's Hill. [7] The fourth and last we shall mention is called Craige's Hill. [8]

There are no ponds in the town worthy of notice, nor mines or minerals as yet discovered. [9]

The wood and timber which grow in Charlton is white, black and red oak, and walnut and chestnut in great plenty; some white pine and some pitch pine; in the low lands there is ash, birch, maple, &c., &c.

In Charlton there are a few dealers in European and India goods, as is usual in country towns; [10] and they have also all the common tradesmen and mechanics. But there are two tanners [11] in the town to be noticed who carry on their business to a very considerable degree, and in the most advantageous manner, viz., Capt. Israel Waters and Mr. Asa Corben; and especially the former, in the northerly part, who carries on his work to great perfection. He has an excellent bark mill carried by water, and upon a new construction, whereby he grinds all his bark. On the same stream a little below there is a gin still, [12] a brewery, malt house

5.—This high hill on the town farm, is dartially covered with a splendid growth of pine. The town farm was the homestead of Ebenezer Davis, for many years a prominent and influential citizen.

6.—This hill is now owned by Moses Woodbury. It was originally owned by one John Edwards, who in later years resided in the southwest part of the town. This hill, we understand, is not the highest point of land in Charlton by a few feet. The "Little Mugget," just southeast of Charlton Depot is the highest. This Little Mugget is not mentioned among the elevated lands of our town ; it was probably at this time covered with woods, and its height and range of sight were not realized until the hill was shorn of the forest.

7.—The elevation just south of Dresser Hill was originally owned by the Blood Brothers, who early came into this town and purchased. The farm of Dexter Blood has ever remained in the name and family. Dresser Hill was quite a military resort; there being many trainings and reviews here. In those days a gun house stood at the northeast corner of the lot southeast of the Dresser Hill school-house, which contained artillery, etc, property of the state. Captain Dresser, the father of Major Moses Dresser, who built the present Dresser Hill House (1805 kept a hotel and was enterprising in many ways.

8.—Craige's Hill is now owned by Lewis C. Prindle.

9.—A little above Otis Walker's mill was a forge at one time for making pig and bar iron from ore found in the vicinity; but either from fault in the ore or the work the iron was not very good. Part of the dam of this forge was standing a few years since.

The ponds of Charlton today for the most part are reservoirs; the water privileges of adjoining towns are better, owing to the fact that Charlton is a watershed and discharges its waters on either side of the town. Baker pond which is almost the only natural pond wholly or in part within our limits was named after Joseph C. Baker, the grandfather of Harrison Baker of Charlton and Zephaniah Baker of Dudley.

10.—These stores were at the north side the city, Charlton Centre and at Dresser Hill.

11.—Captain Israel Waters lived on the place now owned by Samuel Rich, and his tannery was just south of the house, and at that time was one of the most flourishing in the vicinity; the remains of the foundation are still to be seen. The Bark mill was nearest the pond. The tannery of Mr. Corbin was in the southeast part of the town.

12.—The residence of Mr. Wheelock is the present residence of Mr. Daniel F. Russell. The house and outbuildings were

and corn mill under the same roof, the property of Mr. Eli Wheelock, who erected said works in the year 1792, and where he carries on each branch of business very largely to his own and the public interest. On the same stream there are several grist and saw mills and other water works; and most of the mechanics live in this north part of the town. There are also a number of pot and pearl ash works [13] in different parts of the town, where large quantities of pot and pearl ash are annually made and exported. Charlton is in many respects one of the foremost towns in the county. It is situated southwest from Boston at a distance of sixty miles; and from Worcester court-house it is fifteen miles, a little to the southwest. It is bounded north, by Spencer; east, by Oxford; south by Dudley; and west, by Sturbridge.

built by Mr. Wheelock, and the site of the "gin mill," which added so much to the "public interest,' is just west of Mr. Russell's barn, the brick walls of which are still standing. Between North Side and Millward there were several workshops of various kinds. The scythe shops at Millward were not erected until about the beginning of this century.

13.—There were several pot and pearl asheries in town, the sites of some of them are still seen and known. We will mention some: The one owned by Salem Town was on the knoll, just north of William H. Wakefield's house, near the juncure of the road leading to North Side; the excavation is visible. The water was furnished by a spring just below it. Just west of the house of Charles R. Austin, for a long time owned by Samuel Rich, there was another; a well now marks the spot. Just southeast of Mr. John Tyler's barn also was one. In certain seasons the grass is excellent in that part of the meadow covered with ashes, and other seasons the crops are poor; everything depends whether the season is wet or dry. At Andrew Reynold's place, also, a few rods southeast of his barn, was one. It was run by John Edwards, Jr.; an old well is now at the place. There were asheries also on Leonard Carpenter's farm; near Solomon Richardson's; near the Four Corners, south of the Alpheus Davis estate. There were others, no doubt, in town. We could, if time permitted, add other notes to this brief history of our town. written over eighty years ago. There have been many changes, but landmarks are still in our midst which note the industry of the fathers. It is well for us to learn all we can of them that we may the better direct our labors in life.

THE END

MASONS OF CHARLTON.

FAYETTE LODGE.

In the records of the Grand Lodge of masons of Massachusetts we learn under the date of March 14, 1796 that:—"a petition was presented from Ebenezer Phillips and others for a charter to erect and hold a lodge in the town of Charlton by the name and title of Fayette lodge. 'Twas voted that the prayer of petitioners be granted.'' In the same records of June 10, 1799 we find that "the petition received from Fayette lodge praying for liberty to meet annually by rotation at Charlton, Sturbridge and Dudley was read and voted the prayer of the petitioners be granted during the pleasure of the grand lodge."

The masons in this vicinity will be seen lived at a distance from each other and that they accommodated each other as much as they could. The meetings for several years were held in the house of Gen. Salem Towne, which was erected the same year of the formation of the lodge. The lodge was held in a room fitted up for the purpose by Mr. Towne, he at that time being an active mason. This room after the lodge was removed was made into household apartments of the Towne manse. This house is still in a very good state of repair proving the excelency of the timber and the skill of the workmanship of which and by which it was made. The charter of the lodge was granted March 14, 1796. A copy of the seal is before us. The motto above the seal is "*Conjuncti fraterno Amore.*" On the outside of the circular seal is "Fayette Lodge, Charlton Mass.," and within are the compasses, the Bible and the motto "*Nil Sine Deo.*" In 1806 the Grand Master appointed R. W. Eben. H. Phillips of Charlton, as Deputy Grand Master for the 6th district. We do not know how large a territory this district embraced; but probably it contained a dozen or so of lodges. It was Mr. Phillips' task to visit these lodges from time to time and report their condition to the Grand lodge.

In 1804 "Welds' tavern" was erected, and Mr. Welds fitted his hall for the

fraternity. This house is now owned and occupied by Mr. David Craig at the Centre. The fraternity did not meet here, however, many times but removed to Dresser Hill, in the tavern built the following year by Major Moses Dresser, and which masonic hall was fitted at his entire expense. It may be said that the hall in "Dresser house" was designed for the Royal Arch Chapter, and after the chapter which received its charter in 1805 was well at work, the lodge transferred its meetings from the Centre to Dresser Hill. The conditions, or among them, which Major Dresser offered the fraternity if they would hold their meetings in his hall were, he would give them "meals of two or three dishes of meat, puddings and pies, with white bread and cheese for twenty-five cents;" he would "care for the horses for ten cents," and would give the hall free of expense except when a fire was needed. From this time on until the "Masonic excitement" their meetings were held in this hall. The question of cost must have been of no small importance, especially if the scattered members attended with regularity. They came some distance and of course wanted their horses and themselves cared for. Dresser Hill house was quite a resort in the early part of this century; and in earlier times in the tavern which Major Moses Dresser occupied before the present house was erected.

In 1826 the Doric lodge was formed in Southbridge which materially affected the growth and influence of Fayette lodge. But with the "excitement" both of these lodges suspended their meetings. The opposition was very fierce and none of the masons were eager to hold on against the pressure. The lodge was never revived in Charlton, though in Southbridge the masons came together, united their efforts, received new members, and are today a strong and influential body.

KING SOLOMON'S CHAPTER.

This chapter received its charter September 18, 1805. It was granted to G. Plimpton, Jr., and others. It seems to have a varied experience for the ten succeeding years. It was represented in the grand chapter in 1808 by Sumner Barstow; in 1810 by John Brown, in 1812 by Sumner Barstow; and in 1814 by Rev. Richard Carrigue. In 1815 the chapter purchased a set of new jewels, and a new regalia, at the cost of nearly $120. The chapter took this opportunity to have a public installation of officers, which made one of the great occasions of our town. This installation took place September 6, 1815. We quote from the grand chapter records concerning this memorable gathering. "A procession was then formed and proceeded to the Rev. Mr. Whipple's meeting house, where King Solomon's chapter was solemnly consecrated and the officers installed in accordance with the ancient form. After the benediction was pronounced the procession was again formed and returned to the hall, where the companions and brethren sat down to a plentiful and splendid entertainment prepared by Jonathan Copeland. Sentiments, songs (the singing was led by a Professor Navill) and

social hilarity prevailed, and at an early hour the grand chapter returned to their room and closed; and the company separated well pleased with the harmony and good fellowship which had marked all the proceedings of the day."

The following persons were installed as the officers of the chapter: W. E. Richard Carrique, High Priest; E. John Brown, King; E. Benjamin Stow, Scribe; Comp. Thadeus Marble, Treasurer; Comp. Jason Waters, Secretary; Comp. Gershom Plympton, R. A. Captain; Comp. Ephraim Willard, C. of H., Comp. Erich Marsh, P. S.; Comp. Reuben Harrington, Joseph G. Hall and Francis O. Clark, Masters of the Vails; Comps. Jonathan Copeland and Moses Williams, Stewards; and Rufus Bacon, Tyler.

This chapter was evidently working under a dispensation for various reasons for nearly ten years. John Wilder of Leicester was elected its high priest in 1817, after the removal of Rev. Richard Carrique from this vicinity. This same year Rev. Richard Carrique was installed as the first high priest of Adoniram chapter at Attleborough, Mass. At the session of the grand chapter, 1818, Rev. Jonathan Going of Worcester, king, and Nathan Knowlton, scribe, were representatives from and for King Solomon's chapter. This chapter was represented at the yearly gatherings of the grand chapter for a considerable number of years. Rev. Richard Carrique alluded to, began his residence in Charlton in 1812, and preached for the Universalists in this and adjoining towns for some three years. He died in Hudson, N. Y., in 1849. Rev. Jonathan Going was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Worcester, at this time, and after the formation of R. A. chapter in Worcestor, was an officer in that and was quite active until it became dormant.

In 1825 there was another large gathering of the chapter to celebrate the nativity of St. John the Baptist. This occurred the 24th of June. From the records of the chapter we learn that the following named were the committee of arrangements: Stephen Eddy, Albigence Marsh, Harvey Dresser, John Spurr and David Lathe. Mr. Linus Childs of Woodstock, Ct., was selected to deliver the oration. Major John Spurr was marshal of the day. The oration was delivered in the Center meeting house.

The last writing in the chapter records was May 12, 1829, though we think on the authority aged citizens there were meetings after this, ever in 1831. The charter of this chapter was revoked at the session of the grand chapter, Sept. 8, 1840, and Sept. 13, 1842, it was stricken from the list of chapters and its charter forfeited.

The chapter held its regular meetings in the Dresser Hill house, and when they were well at work in 1805–6 the Blue lodge, which had been holding its meetings in the house of Gen. Salem Town and in the William Welds tavern, now David Craig's house, united with them in holding their meetings in the same place. In the "old hall" in

Dresser Hill house, underneath one of the lids of the side settees, is this inscription, "Built 1805; finished painting J'n'r 6th 1808 by Nathan Walden."

CONCLUSION.

The historical notes we have written out were gathered in the usual labors of the parish, in conversation with the older members of the community who delight to dwell upon the times and memories of their youth, and from records and books which have come to hand relating to our town. The author has had only a residence of three years in Charlton, hence he has not been able to seek out all which might have been written. But now as the pastorate of the author closes he could only put in permanent form the notes he had gathered, that they might aid the future historian of the town. During our residence here also we have written a history of the Universalist parish, to which we have ministered, which was delivered to the parish in the shape of sermons. The notes upon the parish made four sermons of ordinary length. Upon invitation of Rev. Dr. T. B. Thayer, editor of the *Universalist Quarterly*, this history will be rewritten and condensed for the pages of the periodical over which he so ably presides. It will appear in said *Quarterly* at no distant day. It is the author's design to secure extra copies of this history, and should any one desire a copy, it could be furnished at a small price.

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Errata et Addenda.

Page 5, column two. "Barefoot" was a name given to this ocality by Capt. Abijah Lamb, who in the old militia days ommanded the "South-west Company." Many of his compa- y on training days were said to appear in the ranks barefoot- d; hence the name was given to the locality which it bears to his day.

Page 6, column one. The tomb has since been torn down nd the place levelled.

Page 8, column one, tenth line from bottom. The word plat" for "flat."

Page 13, column two, eleventh line from bottom. "Main" or "plain."

Page 16, column one. Parley Laflin was sexton just previ- us to Comins Litchfield.

Page 25. The records of the Masonic Lodge and Royal rch Chapter have been in the possession of Mr. Albigence Iarsh, formerly of Charlton, but now of Saunenim, Ill., where e is still living at the age of eighty-six. He became interested n these sketches and gave the author many items of interest. hese records are now to be restored and preserved in the rchives of the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter of Massachu- tts.

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